Implementation of Panchayati Raj System in States

87. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI:

SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Panchayati Raj system is not implemented so far in many States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have any plan or proposal to ensure the implementations of Panchayati Raj system in such States;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether there is any proposal to give such authority to panchayats so that they can develop resources and manage funds on their own and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) The Panchayati Raj system is being implemented in all the States/UTs to which Part IX of the Constitution applies, except for Jharkhand and Pondicherry where elections are still to be held. However, implementation is uneven. Therefore, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened seven Round Table meetings with State Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj and evolved by consensus a set of around 150 points for action which have been put together in a Compendium that was adopted unanimously at the conclusion of the last Round Table in Jaipur. The Ministry have now initiated a process of visiting each of the States/UTs to review with the authorities concerned the progress in implementing the points for action contained in the Compendium. It is expected that this will accelerate the pace of implementation of the provisions of Part IX, read with Article 243ZD, of the Constitution and bring about greater conformity, in both letter and spirit, to the Constitutional provisions of Panchayati Raj in all States/UTs concerned.

(e) Article 243H of the Constitution provides powers to im pose taxes by, and funds of, the Panchayats. It provides that the Legislature of a State may, by law—

(a) authorize a Panchayat to levy, collect and appropriate such

taxes, duties, tolls and fees in accordance with such procedure and subject to such limits;

(b) assign to a Panchayat such taxes, duties, tolls and fees levied and collected by the State Government for such purposes and subject to such conditions and limits;

(c) provide for making such grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the Consolidated Fund of the State; and

(d) provide for constitution of such Funds for crediting all moneys received, respectively, by or on behalf of the Panchayats and also for the withdrawal of such money therefrom,

as may be specified in the law.

In pursuance to the above provisions of the Constitution, State Governments have given the powers and funds to the Panchayats to manage their affairs.

Conditions for indo-Iran Gas Pipeline Project

†88. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are reconsidering to start Indo-Iran gas pipeline project and if so, the names of the countries through which this pipe line will pass;

(b) the extent to which India will be benefited by the said project; and

(c) whether neighbouring countries have laid down any conditions for setting up the said project and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The proposed onland gas pipeline from Iran to India would pass through Pakistan.

(b) The import of natural gas is crucial to meeting the huge deficit in current and projected domestic demand for natural gas, without which the country's energy security would be seriously jeopardized. Globally, experience suggests that gas supplies through pipeline is cheaper and more abundant than the alternative LNG route.

(c) Discussions are at a preliminary stage and are proceeding on the

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.